

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ROK PRESS WELCOMES REAFFIRMATIONS OF US COMMITMENT

1. ROK PRESS APRIL 17 GAVE TOP PLAY TO SECDEF SCHLESINGER COMMENT TO OVERSEAS PRESS CLUB THAT US TREAT OBLIGATION TO ROK REMAINS "HIGHEST LAW OF THE LAND." PRESS ALSO EMPHASIZED NEW YORK TIMES REPORT THAT US TOP OFFICIAL SUCH AS VICE PRESIDENT OR SECRETARY OF STATE OR DEFENSE WOULD SOON VISIT ROK TO GIVE FURTHER REASSURANCE. THESE ENCOURAGING STORIES WERE AUGMENTED BY REPORT FROM TAIPEI THAT VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER HAD RECONFIRMED TO RPIMIN KIM THE US COMMITMENT TO HELP ROK "UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE" AND BY STORY FROM TOKYO THAT FONMIN MIYAZAWA HAD CONFIRMED TO DIET THE PART OF NIXON-SATO COMMUNIQUE STATING THAT SECURITY OF ROK IS ESSENTIAL TO THAT OF JAPAN. THIS NEWS ALSO SUCCEEDED IN BALANCING BROAD FUNERIAL COVERAGE OF INDOCHINA DENOUEMENT AND PORTENTOUS ANNOUNCEMENT OF IMPENDING KIM IL-SONG VISIT TO PEKING.

2. CHOSUN ILBO CARRIED COMMENTS ON SCHLESINGER
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REMARKS BY MOFA OFFICIALS, INCLUDING AMERICAN BUREAU DIRECTOR YI SANG-OK, WHO EXPLAINED THAT A TREATY RATIFIED BY CONGRESS SHALL HAVE THE SAME EFFECT AS DOMESTIC LAWS. OFFICIALS FOUND REMARKS REASSURING.

THEY WENT ON TO SAY THAT "NOT ONLY USG BUT CONGRESS AND US PUBLIC OPINION ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT INDOCHINA AND KOREA SITUATIONS ARE DIFFERENT." THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SOME CONGRESSMEN ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA BUT SAID THAT NOT ONE, INCLUDING CONGRESSMAN FRASER, DOUBTS NEED FOR MUTUAL SECURITY TIE, "SINCE PRESERVATION OF PEACE AND SECURITY ON KOREAN PENINSULA SERVES COMMON INTEREST OF KOREA AND US."

3. EDITORIALS HAVE WELCOMED SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S REMARKS BUT CALLED FOR URGENT STRENGTHENING OF ROK-US DEFENSE TREATY. SEMI-OFFICIAL KYUNGHYANG SHINMUN, POINTING OUT THAT TREATY HAS NO NATO-STYLE ARTICLE TRIGGERING AUTOMATIC US MILITARY INTERVENTION, SAID THAT "USG SHOULD PROVE ITS DETERMINATION BY ACTION." GOVERNMENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE KOREA HERALD CALLED REMARKS BOTH REASSURING AND REALISTIC AND SAID IT IS QUITE EVIDENT THAT COLLAPSE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA "DRASTICALLY INCREASES THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF THE SECURITY OF THIS REPUBLIC AS A PIVOTAL ELEMENT IN THE MAINTENANCE OF THE PEACE AND STABILITY OF NORTHEAST ASIA." HERALD CONCLUDED THAT US CONGRESS AND PUBLIC "SHOULD NOT PINION THE US ADMINISTRATION ANY FURTHER IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREIGN POLICY."

4. GOVERNMENT SEOUL SHINMUN AND MAJOR TONGA ILBO ECHOED THEME THAT SECDEF REMARKS ENCOURAGING BUT US MILITARY ASSISTANCE IS STILL NEEDED. LATTER OBSERVED THAT VENUE OF SCHLESINGER SPEECH WAS SAME AS THAT OF ACHESON IN 1950 BUT THAT REMARKS WERE "ENTIRELY DIFFERENT." ROUNDING OUT IMPRESSIVE NUMBER OF EDITORIALS ON SAME SUBJECT IN ONE DAY, CHUNGANG ILBO AND SHINA ILBO FOUND SPEECH REASSURING. SHINA COMMENTED HOPEFULLY THAT "WE DON'T HAVE TO BE TOO SKEPTICAL ABOUT US COMMITMENTIT IS OBVIOUS THAT US CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS ARE AWAKENED BY FAILURE OF US POLICY TOWARD INDOCHINA.
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5. COMMENT: NEW REAFFIRMATIONS BY USG OFFICIALS OF US COMMITMENT TO ROK APPEAR TO HAVE MODERATED TO SOME DEGREE THE QUESTIONING OF THAT COMMITMENT BY ROK PRESS. MOREOVER, NOW THAT PRESS IS DEVOTING MOST OF ITS COMMENTS ON INDOCHINA TO OBITUARIZING, DISTINCTION BETWEEN INDOCHINESE AND KOREAN SITUATIONS IS FINDING INCREASING ACCEPTANCE. NONETHELESS, PRESS IS AS WHOLE RELUCTANT TO BELIEVE THAT ROK CAN RELY COMPLETELY ON US. AS KYUNGHYANG SHINMUN WROTE: "DESPITE RECONFIRMATION OF US COMMITMENT BY USG, WE STILL WORRY ABOUT FUTURE USG ATTITUDE IN THE EVENT OF CONTINGENCY." EDITORIAL POST-MORTEM OF INDOCHINA

MENTION "US ABANDONMENT," "BETRAYAL," AND "INSINCERITY."
WHILE PRESS READY TO GIVE US BENEFIT OF DOUBT ON
FUTURE ROK RELATIONS, IT CONTINUES TO EMPHASIZE
DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-RELIANCE AND INDEPENDENCE AS BEST
COURSE TO ENSURE SURVIVAL.
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